THE

Commonweal

MAN THE MANIPULATOR

The Secularization of Culture

by Thomas F. O'Dea

WORLD OF THE MYSTERY

Crime and Criticism

by John P. Sisk

FROM FRANCE

Crisis in Algeria

by Robert Barrat

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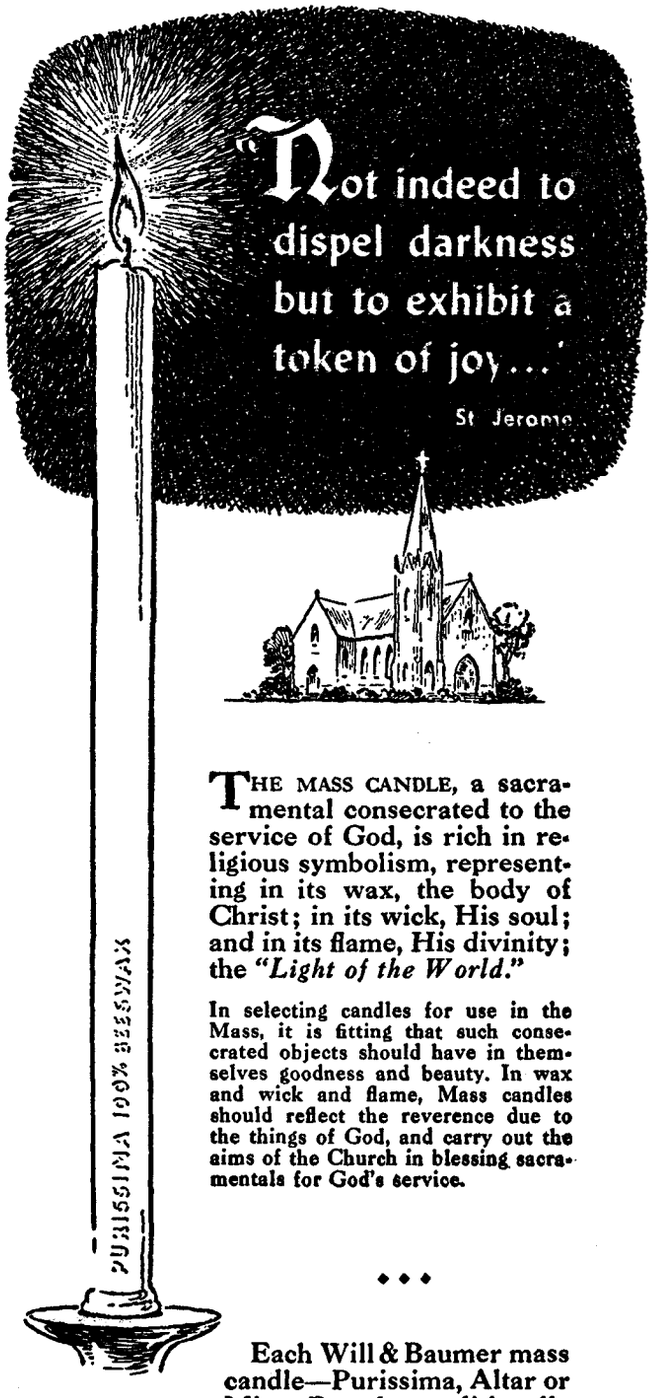

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The
Commonweal
A Weekly Review of Public Affairs, Literature, and the Arts
THIRTY-SECOND YEAR OF PUBLICATION

week by week

ISRAEL AND ANTI-SEMITISM

THE DANGER of war in the Middle East is great. The questions underlying Arab-Israel enmity are complex, and this is not an attempt to untangle them. Rather it is a plea for all to discuss the issues in a way that will not spread disunity and hatred among Americans. One example of the way we think the Arab-Israel issue should not be discussed is provided by the editor's column in *Our Sunday Visitor* for March 25, called "Right or Wrong."

"Israel is a state that should not exist," says the editorialist in a flat statement that happens to echo the most intransigent Arab opinion—the kind of statement which, when it comes from Arab sources, makes Israelis fear a war of annihilation. There are, according to *Our Sunday Visitor*, two types of Jews: "Those who consider Judaism as a religion pure and simple and those who hold that a Jew's first loyalty is to the State of Israel and only secondarily to the country of his citizenship . . . . the Zionists contend that Jews are Israelites first, Americans second."

This, in our opinion, is nonsense, and dangerous nonsense at that. What American Jew holds that his first political loyalty is to the state of Israel? What American Jews contend that Jews are Israelites first and Americans second? We do not believe they exist, and Catholics should be particularly wary of such charges of divided loyalty; certainly, the same charge has been made against Catholics so often that one would expect a Catholic editor to hesitate about using it against the Jews.

Our Sunday Visitor apparently finds it highly objectionable that American Jews raise money for Israel. Why this should be resented is not clear to us. Such fund-raising is hardly precedent-shattering; to cite just one example, Americans of Irish descent have never been ashamed of the money they raised to finance the birth of the Irish Free State.

Throughout his article the *O.S.V.* writer refers again and again to the "sixteen million Jews in the world," making the grimly ironic mistake of overstating the world's Jewish population by about six million, presumably because he is using pre-Hitler figures. The fact that these six million missing Jews died in their ghetto prisons, in concentration camps and in Hitler's gas chambers does not make Israel right and the Arab nations wrong in the present dispute. But their ghosts walk through history as a constant reproach to the Christian conscience and, in this context, as a necessary reminder of the way discussions of the Arab-Israel dispute should not be carried out.

"YOU CAN see the problem that faces our American statesmen in dealing with Israel," writes *Our Sunday Visitor*. "For Israel is not just another government like Jordan or Greece or Eire. . . . And in the back of every statesman's mind when he speaks of Israel is the knowledge that he is dealing not with a mere Middle Eastern nation but with millions of American Jews—with the 'Jewish vote,' for what it may be worth."

But in so far as bloc voting is actually a fact, does *Our Sunday Visitor* think that an American statesman who deals with the crisis on Cyprus will not have a "Greek vote" to reckon with? Or that an American statesman who was too critical of Italy's role in World War II would not have had to worry about the "Italian vote"? Or that pre-war interventionist Senators did not suffer from a pro-German vote? In a country like ours such pressure is taken for granted.

Most religious and ethnic groups have causes dear to them. When it was proposed a few years ago that the U.S. should have an Ambassador to the Vatican, for example, we thought the idea

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was a good one and in the national interest, and we said so. But discussion of this question in much of the Catholic press was hardly unemotional and objective in character, and perhaps it was too much to expect that it would be. In the same way, it may be hard to persuade many Jews that there is something to be said for the Arabs, but are Jews supposed to be the only Americans who must shun all emotion and appearance of bias or forever risk being called un-American?

We think many Jewish organizations in America have often been one-sided on Middle Eastern issues. The practice among some Jewish groups of asking candidates for office to commit themselves in advance for or against arms for Israel we consider a mistake. We think that the plight of the Arab refugees has not received sufficient attention in this country and that the whole Arab-Israel issue is much more complex than the partisans on either side will grant. We wish both sides would pay more attention to the UN when the decision goes counter to their wishes, and we hope a calmer atmosphere will eventually permit discussion of Pope Pius' plan for the internationalization of Jerusalem. We think American Jews should be careful not to assume that any statement of the Arab side of the dispute is prompted by anti-Jewish sentiment. We believe all these things. But at the same time, and most importantly, we think there is a serious obligation upon all who discuss Arab-Israel relations to do so soberly and carefully, and in terms that will not play into the hands of the anti-Semite here at home. Surely this is not too much to expect.

NEXT WEEK

ERNESTINE EVANS writes an article introducing a special children's book section prepared by Claire Huchet Bishop.

"Out of the mouths of babes a lot is to be learned. Why should we teach them to be afraid? Long before jet planes they accepted Arab flying carpets with delight. . . They enjoy a variety of colors, whether in the rainbow or in the hues of the different races. . . The mood of studying them will be more fruitful if we begin with what *they* can do for us, instead of regarding them as a market for lush commercialism, as juveniles to be kept juvenile, distracted with comics and television and teen-age lipsticks."

"REPORT FROM AMERICA"

INABILITY to convey the essence of the United States to other lands has long been recognized as a grave handicap. It can hardly be denied that we inspire little wholehearted friendship among other peoples. The State Department has brought over hundreds of writers, journalists, scholars and businessmen from other nations in recent years to see America for themselves. We have sent on tour a number of American cultural missions. We have our international broadcasts and American libraries in a number of foreign cities. But, spurred on by unceasing propaganda, unfavorable impressions persist. Among the factors responsible are the envy engendered by the wealth, power and restrictive policies of the United States, fears of nuclear weapons and of the demands of mass production, and the emphasis on glittering and sordid aspects of American life in the movies we exported.

All this underlies the potential importance of the techniques embodied in the new "Report from America" TV series produced by the British Broadcasting Corporation in cooperation with the U.S. Information Agency. The object is to show the people of Britain Americans just as they are. Professional actors are notable by their absence. These programs deal with typical problems in American everyday life. Traffic and parking problems, a small weekly newspaper (the *Suffolk County News* of Sayville, Long Island) and its community's activities and the way a city like Pittsburgh beat its smog problem comprise the first three subjects in this series, which the British press declares to be increasing appreciation of America greatly.

The fact that the peoples of two lands realize that they have many of the same difficulties to overcome serves as a promising start. But it would seem that the series has the further opportunity of presenting one of this country's principal virtues, the way a sense of the common good animates community life. This is a characteristic which has a strong appeal for all peoples. It is typical of our smaller communities to organize a "rescue squad" or ambulance service entirely staffed by volunteers; neighbors do pitch in to help build a burned-out local church; concerted action will often save a local industry. Town meetings when dealing with issues of lively interest can convey much about American democratic principles. All these elements were involved in a single one of these BBC programs. It would be well worth considering the adaptation of this method for TV broadcasts in other tongues.

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MEMBERS OF THE WEDDING

SHAKESPEARE has immortalized Cleopatra's voyage up the river Cydnus to meet Anthony, and all the world knows of "the barge she sat in, like a burnished throne." Miss Grace Kelly, embarking for her marriage to Prince Rainier, had no barge with purple sails—she had the *U.S.S. Constitution*—and in place of Shakespeare she had twenty-four reporters and photographers on shipboard. She will have, perhaps, less poetry than Cleopatra but far more extensive news coverage.

We do not, of course, begrudge Miss Kelly and the Prince any of the publicity which surrounds their wedding, but we do regret that the event is bringing out the competitive beast in news agencies and turning Monaco into a Madison Avenue jungle. Thus the United Press, which is setting up an entire bureau in Monaco, had announced, before the *Constitution* could get its anchor up, that "UP correspondent Gloria Swanson already has checked in at Monaco to cover the modern fairy tale against the background of her Riviera memories." But how can Miss Swanson, even equipped with Riviera memories, compete with her rival agency, the Associated Press, which is pulling its correspondents from such way-stations as Paris, London and Rome to set up a news bureau overlooking the very courtyard of the Royal Palace. NBC is sending nine reporters to cover the wedding, although six were considered enough to handle D-Day. CBS will be represented by a crew of eleven, including, for reasons which elude us at the moment, the news editor of the Washington bureau. It has also been reported that President Eisenhower will probably designate a personal ambassador to represent him.

Faced with this bewildering array of facts, we can understand, if not fully share, the reaction of Mr. Edward P. Morgan, who said recently on his ABC newscast: "I'd like to suggest that Mr. Eisenhower designate Walt Disney. In one gracious gesture, that would confirm what so many people suspect, that we Americans . . . prefer fairy tales to the stark non-fiction of everyday life."

ELECTIONS IN CEYLON

WHEN THE voters of Ceylon, in a free and open election, administered a smashing defeat to the pro-Western government of Sir John Kotelawala, Western diplomats, even those within Ceylon, were stunned. For they had thought, quite correctly, that in his years as Prime Minister, Sir John had proved himself to be a man of certain stature. They also thought that the prestige that he had earned as a strong foe of Communism would assure him continued support.

With the clarity of judgment afforded by hindsight, foreign diplomats now account for the defeat of Sir John by saying that the result of the election turned mainly on local issues, such as the price of sugar and rice, charges of corruption in public affairs, questions of the official language of the country. And they had not realized, they now say, how out of touch with the voters Sir John's party had become in its twenty-five years in office. It had allowed itself, at least in the opinion of the voters, to become aligned with the middle and upper classes, leaving the opposition to speak for the other ninety per cent of the population.

But if the issues which determined the election were truly local, what most concerns foreign diplomats are statements by the victor, Solomon West Ridgway Diaz Bandaranaike, which will have immediate international significance. For where Sir John had said, "I would accept the help of the devil in fighting Communism," and had attacked neutralism, Mr. Bandaranaike warmly embraces it. His program is based on establishing diplomatic relations with Moscow and Peiping, nationalizing foreign-owned tea and rubber plantations, ousting the British forces from military bases, and changing the status of Ceylon from that of a Commonwealth dominion to that of a republic.

At the same time, Mr. Bandaranaike proclaims that "we are not anti-Western and not hostile to the United States. How could I be hostile to a country that produced Mark Twain?" But the last statement is not free of ambiguity, for although Mark Twain is popularly known as a humorist, he was also a fierce opponent of nineteenth century colonial policies.

Mr. Bandaranaike's statements cast doubt upon the opinion that the determining issues in the election were primarily local. But even more impressive is the recent report of a non-official commission of laymen and Buddhist clergy. Called "The Betrayal of Buddhism," this report gives an historical review of Ceylon, and it reveals strong grievances against Portugal and Britain. The positive recommendations are clearly designed to de-Westernize Ceylon, as a brief quotation makes clear: "The leaders of our country have embraced shallow and ephemeral materialism. In a society whose motive force is the acquisition of wealth, the incidence of violence, crime, drunkenness, and gambling is not a matter for surprise. The real and final remedy is

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the displacement of Western materialistic social and individual values and the establishment of genuine values founded on the Buddha Dhamma."

The election and the report, which promises to be influential, repeat an oft-told tale. We are not yet free of the nineteenth century. As colonial peoples attain freedom and adult suffrage they will often react against past oppressive policies even if it is not to their immediate advantage. What is surprising in the recent Ceylon election is not the result, but the fact that Western diplomats were so completely surprised. If we are not to live in a state of perpetual surprise we must realize that these elections are in a pattern that will continue unless we find better solutions beforehand.

THE GALINDEZ CASE

IT IS with profound distress that we write of the unsolved disappearance of a brave champion of human rights, Jesus de Galindez, Representative of the Basque Delegation to the United States and teacher at Columbia University. Mr. Galindez fought with his people against General Franco in the Spanish Civil War and sought refuge first in France and then in the Dominican Republic. He came to the United States in 1946.

His years in the Dominican Republic aroused an intense antipathy for the Trujillo dictatorship. For his doctoral thesis at Columbia Mr. Galindez had prepared a comprehensive, documented study of the workings of that dictatorship based on his own firsthand experience. He also continued to produce articles and pamphlets on the subject despite warnings from Trujillo agents in this country. If such a champion of human liberty should disappear in this country of ours without a trace, it would assuredly be a tragic thing. His findings, and the principles he fought for, will live on.

PLIGHT OF REFUGEES

THE REFUGEE, a symbolic creation of war and national slavery, continues to cast his disturbing shadow over freedom's "green and pleasant land." Austria, for example, is currently asking the West for help in resettling the tens of thousands who have fled their homes in Eastern Europe and sought refuge there. Indeed, since the withdrawal of the Red Army, Austria has become the principal rent in the Iron Curtain through which refugees can escape to freedom. Since the limited Austrian economy cannot absorb the thirty-five thousand Poles, Czechs, Russians, Rumanians and Yugoslavs who have fled to her, she must seek the help of other free nations which can provide, not asylum, but a new home for those who chose freedom.

Austria's plea to the West is all the more urgent because a Soviet mission will shortly arrive there from Moscow in an attempt to persuade the four thousand Russian refugees to return home. Such a move is part of the current Soviet campaign to break up the knots of refugees in Western Europe, whose very presence there encourages others to defect. Even more important, perhaps, in the Soviet strategy, is the fact that the voluntary repatriation of such emigrés to their Iron Curtain countries can be represented as obvious proof of the triumph of Communism, and thus effect the gradual destruction of the oppressed peoples' faith in the West.

To date, the West has devised no defense against this latest Soviet thrust; Colonel William Donovan, war-time chief of O.S.S., recently reported that the Russian "come-home-again" campaign was proving successful largely because little or nothing had been done to assimilate political refugees into a meaningful pattern within the life of the country to which they had fled. In his view, the number of such redefections constitutes a grave peril for the West.

Equally disturbing is the fact that the U.S. in particular has still not made the kind of moral and mental breakthrough which the plight of the refugee demands. Last February, for example, Msgr. Edward E. Swanstrom, Executive Director of Catholic Relief Services, sent a letter to President Eisenhower urging him to use his personal influence to "humanize" and speed up immigration practices under the Refugee Relief Act of 1953. The letter also suggested immediate action on a thirteen-point program designed to cut away the red tape which still hampered the admission of refugees. With the expiration of the Refugee Relief Act only months away, less than 60,000 of the 209,000 refugees provided for by the Act have reached the U.S.

The Administration, however, has shown little but a hardening of the imagination in confronting the refugee problem, and what Msgr. Swanstrom called "the roadblocks of red tape" still bar the path to freedom for many thousands. To them, the homeless with honor, the current Administration's slogans of "peace and prosperity" must have a hollow ring. Themselves heirs, for the most part, of the oldest Christian traditions, they must also wonder why the nation which has for its motto "In God We Trust" should allow red tape to lie, like chains, upon its conscience.

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The Secularization of Culture

"POST-CHRISTIAN THOUGHT CONCEIVES THE WORLD DEVOID OF ANIMATION OR DIVINITY, AN OBJECT REDUCIBLE TO THE PROCESSES OF ABSTRACT SCIENCE"

THOMAS F. O'DEA

IN THE development of Western civilization, three major processes stand out: the spread of Christianity, the rise of modern science, and, closely related to both, the secularization of culture. The last, indeed, is one of the fundamental characteristics of our present world.

Secularization has progressed over several centuries and is characterized by a remarkable shift in the center of gravity of thought and values. The belief—one might almost say the spontaneous recognition—that man and his world are derived from and dependent upon a Power which transcends the appearances of things, that man owes reverence to and obtains strength from that Power, has been dissipated and lost among strategically important strata within Western society. In its place has come a practical—or at best a poetic—terrestrianism, characterized sometimes by a resigned acceptance of a truncated spirituality, sometimes by a simple agnostic matter-of-factness, unconcerned with that of which it is largely unaware, and sometimes marked by a heroic search for significance in the "absurdity" of it all. Since Western culture developed from Christian roots, this process of secularization has taken the concrete form of a de-Christianization.

To examine analytically this secularization, two conceptions seem necessary, one derived from the nature of man, the second from man's nature and from Christian doctrine. The first may be stated succinctly in Martin Buber's terms: man may relate himself to his situation—to things, fellow men, and the mystery of being—in one of two ways. He may make a "technical relation," that is, he may manipulate things by external control, or he may make an "essential relation" to them, responding interiorly to them as subjects. Man may, in short, respond to the other in all realms either as to a "thou" or to an "it." Obviously he must do both if he is to survive—and remain human—but one mode will be dominant. Unless manipulation, the "technical relation," is subordinated to the "essential relation," knowledge and art are reduced to technique, fellowship to impersonal instrumentalism, and religion to unbelief. The first balance required by a truly human life is the subordination of manipulation to the dominance of essential relationships in man's converse with the world.

The second conception required to analyze the secularization of culture refers to the Christian tension between the Kingdom of God and the "world." Here, too, the hierarchical equilibrium is the key to solution: the world is, for the Christian, subordinate to the Kingdom of God. Closely related to this tension is another, rooted in the very nature of man—the tension between the spirit and the flesh; this also admits only of a hierarchical solution, and thus plays a contributing role in upsetting the Christian solution of the Kingdom-world problem.

The secularization of culture, when analyzed in terms of these two fundamental tensions, is seen to be affected by four historical processes: (1) the de-divinization of the world, (2) the Reformation, (3) Liberal Humanism, and (4) Promethean Scientism. The first is closely related to the spread of Christianity, the last to the rise of modern science. The middle two are extreme manifestations of a typical Christian dialectic.

PAGANISM in its deepest intuitions regarded the world with religious reverence. Even when philosophy replaced the cruder polytheism, a soul immanent within the world, although beyond appearances, characterized a cosmos seen as essentially divine. Aristotle, regarding biological data with an awe not unlike that which Rudolf Otto attributed to the experience of the Holy, exclaimed, "Even here gods are present." Nor does Plato clearly abandon this view for the idea of a transcendent Creator who creates *ex nihilo*. It may even be doubted that materialists like Epicurus were atheists in the modern sense. As Erich Frank said, "Atheism, as we understand it today, was unknown in Greek philosophy; for such radical negation of God is possible only when the world has lost its divine character, when God is comprehended as a Being beyond this world—as He was comprehended

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for the first time in the Jewish-Christian religion. Only where God is essentially apart from the world does restriction to this world mean a denial of everything divine."

Indeed, the divinization of the world, so basic to paganism, is precisely what is abhorred in the Old Testament. The Jewish consciousness of the "radical otherness" of God in relation to His creation, together with the Jewish affirmation of the direct intervention of the Transcendent Other in the affairs of men, introduces a new religious perspective. Hebrew horror of idolatry was at bottom an acute awareness of the blasphemy of attributing divinity in any form to creation, "Lest perhaps lifting up thy eyes to heaven thou see the sun and the moon and the stars, all the host of heaven, and be driven on to adore them. . ." (Deut. 4:19). Judaism thus insisted upon an "essential" relation to God, but the world remained chiefly as something to be used and mastered, the object of a "technical" relation.

Christianity continued this Judaic attitude, regarding God and one's fellow men as "Thou" and the world fundamentally as "it." For Christians and Jews, the creation remained essentially good, but it was, in St. Augustine's terms, something to be used. Yet Christianity, in the analogy of being, the Church and the Sacraments, the use of sacramentals, and the acceptance of art, elevated nature to a subordinate but genuine dignity and rendered it worthy of a qualified "essential relation." Such a "restoration" was consistent with the doctrine of the Incarnation, although it was the subject of abuse as in the Renaissance, and the object of violent protest as in Iconoclasm and Puritanism. To sum up a complicated development: Judaism and Christianity de-divinized the world. They reduced it to a prosaic object, to an "it." It was no longer worthy of the essential relation accorded it by paganism.

Once this conception became central, two deviations were possible if the belief in a transcendent God was lost. One was to re-divinize the world—attempted by various explicit and implicit pantheisms; the other was to accept reality simply as a manipulatable object. Once he lost faith in God—once he ceased to be a Christian or a Jew—Western man could try to make the world a "thou" again or take it as an "it." The Judeo-Christian rigor had been too severe. Despite valiant attempts, no genuine immanentism gained the day; it was the latter alternative that won out.

Post-Christian thought in its dominant shadings conceives the world devoid of animation or divinity, an object reducible to the colorless, tasteless, noiseless processes of abstract science, a world which is a "thing" in a more mathematical but not fundamentally different sense from the Hobbesian. It was this development that was new. Unbelief was hardly new. The Manipulated World was.

ONLY THOSE aspects of Protestantism and Liberal Humanism which concern our analysis can be indicated here, and those only in passing. These movements represented two extremes in the tension between the kingdom and the world, and reflected severe strains in the balance between the spirit and the flesh.

On one side there arose a new classicism, glorying in nature and in the book. "The Renaissance," said Cassirer, "strove for a religion of affirmation of the world and of the intellect, a religion which conceded to both their specific value. . ." Such affirmation continued into the Enlightenment, where in Encyclopedism it repudiated any Christian conceptions whatever. Closely related was an important sociological development, the rise of lay classes, including a lay intelligentsia, destroying irrevocably the clerical monopoly of learning. From this humanism and the classes which embodied it, there came, as time went on, not only classicism and rationalism, but Latin Freemasonry, anti-clericalism, socialism and finally Communism.

All these different tendencies share one important attribute. They represent an offshoot in modern conditions of an earlier Catholic recognition of the world. They continue the classical element in the Catholic synthesis and assert its autonomy, seeking its fulfillment unsobered by religion. They have remained important, especially south of the Rhine-Danube frontier (or Rhine-Danube-Rio Grande frontier). While they contain elements which must find representation in any new Christian synthesis, in their disjunction they display that loss of orientation to God characteristic of secularism.

In the North the revolt took another direction. As Reinhold Niebuhr put it, "For the Renaissance, the Catholic interpretation of the human situation is too pessimistic; and for the Reformation it is too optimistic." Despite a common, or rather parallel, revolt against ecclesiastical authority, from a more basic point of view the two movements are opposites.

Protestantism was an attempt to find a Christian center of gravity in a world of social and moral disintegration and national and intellectual innovation. Troeltsch states that the Christian ideal is one "which cannot be realized in this world apart from compromise. Therefore the history of the Christian Ethos becomes the story of a constantly renewed search for this compromise, and of fresh opposition to this spirit of compromise." In every age Christians attempt to find a concrete workable balance between the Kingdom and the world, translating the hierarchical solution into life. In this period, the attempt led to a radical bifurcation. The concrete balance involved in the medieval synthesis proved to be historically limited in application. Overemphasis came first on one side and then on the other, each started by prelates and clerics,

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both continued by the new lay classes. The fabric of Christendom was rent. Religion was separated from important areas of life, facilitating secularization. Moreover, religion was itself soon thrown on the defensive.

SCIENCE regards the object of its studies precisely as object, an "it" undefinable without reference to the operations—the manipulations—necessary to observe or measure it, and given meaning within mathematical schemata where it is treated as the object of abstract "handling," of symbolic manipulation. This way of seeing reality, which Herbert Butterfield regards as sharing with the rise of Christianity the position of greatest significance in Western history, was the result, in his words, of our putting on a new thinking cap, rather than of new facts. It derived from the new ability to see the world in terms capable of mathematical expression and manipulation.

Such a view held great promise: theoretically it suggested the possibility of encompassing all reality through a set of mathematical concepts; practically it indicated the possibility of manipulating this reality for the benefit of man. Science, related as it was both to the optimism and classicism and to the pessimism and amoralism of the centuries that saw its rise, harbored a new Prometheanism. It was Descartes who summed up the central theme of this Scientific Prometheanism: to become the masters and possessors of nature.

That the rise of science represented a glorious conquest of the human spirit is too secure a judgment of history to be questioned. Moreover, the conflict between science and religion which marked its development was of complex origin. The revolt of the lay intellectual, the struggle for a justified autonomy against theological monopoly, accidental complications as in the Galileo case and over-identification of Christian doctrine with particular philosophical positions—all these enter into this complicated conflict. Yet is this all? Anti-religious mythology has remained too long and too securely a part of scientism. Is it not possible that behind all the accidents of history, beneath all the conditioning of sociological factors, there may be a basic ideational and attitudinal imbalance? Is it possible that religion suspects the Prometheanism of science of a subtle *hubris?*

I do not wish to deny the possibility of a Christian Prometheanism subduing the earth under God, nor could I deny the historical reality of the many devout Christians who were pioneers in science. Yet it is beyond doubt that, with that tendency of the scientific mentality which embraces a Promethean scientism and denies God, Man the Manipulator has arrived to take charge of the Manipulatable World.

Julian Huxley has declared that man's role in nature is to be "the agent of evolution," to conduct "that process to still further heights." To perform this task, which has now shifted from the biological to the cultural sphere, Huxley urges the importance of knowledge. He adds, however, that man must also have some evocative and unifying idea, what he calls a "noetic integrator." He states, "Gods have been extremely potent noetic integrators in the last few millennia of human history: but it is becoming clear that *God* [italicized by Huxley], like all other concepts involving the animistic projection of man's mental and spiritual attributes into non-human nature, is ceasing to have interpretative value and needs replacing by some non-animistic construction, such as the concept of a self-transforming and self-transcending reality."

THUS HAS developed the world in which we live, in which the terrestrianism of the here-below limits the horizon of large numbers, while many have lost the ability to make any genuinely essential relation to reality. Even fellow men become more exclusively the objects of instrumental treatment. Exploitation there has always been; inability to conceive of relationships other than technical is a mark of the latter days. Secularization of culture, while making the world all, simultaneously reduces it to an "it." It makes man-as-agent an operator, and man-as-patient a soulless object.

The Catholic cannot but experience a deep historical anguish in the face of such developments. He is moved to say with Pascal, "When I see the blindness and the wretchedness of man, when I regard the whole silent universe, and man without light, left to himself, and, as it were, lost in this corner of the universe, without knowing who has put him there, what he has come to do, what will become of him at death, and incapable of all knowledge, I become terrified. . ." As intellectual and scientist, he meets this secularized world daily in a thousand guises. Should he be a layman he is the more exposed, unprotected by the relative insulation of clerical dress and unreinforced by clerical solidarity. He cannot find even the irrational relief which some of his brethren may occasionally enjoy in blindly attacking these trends and all their consequences. He must be a friend of everything in nature and culture that can lead man once again to a sense of the Transcendent. He must cherish everything in man and in art that can help secularized man to find the possibility of essential relationships within the depths of his own psyche, and he must follow his calling and love his neighbor amid the disarray. The hierarchical balance between the essential and the technical relation, and between the Kingdom and the world, must find its suitable modern expression, and here the Catholic intellectual has great responsibilities.

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Crisis in Algeria

ROBERT BARRAT

THE ALGERIAN crisis daily becomes more and more of a national drama, of even greater gravity than the Indochina affair. Vietnam, more than twelve thousand miles away, involved very few Frenchmen personally. For the most part, our troops—except toward the end—were mercenaries of the Foreign Legion, North Africans or Negroes enrolled more or less voluntarily. But this time the distance is a few hundred miles and Algiers only two hours by air from Marseilles. A million Europeans reside in Algeria, half of them of French stock. There is hardly a French family which does not have some relative or friend in Algeria. And French investments there total thousands of billions of francs. In addition, France has been told that if she is forced to leave Algeria the whole of native Africa will speedily slip out of her influence.

Few people try to face up to the Algerian situation objectively. Most of the French newspapers deal in these nationalistic terms: "What France has accomplished in Algeria"; "What the loss of Algeria would cost France"; "What would happen to Algeria without France." The most honest, who acknowledge our errors of the past fifty years in the matter of the political emancipation of nine million Algerian Moslems, clearly admit the need for immediate social and even political reforms. But this is on condition that there be no dealings with the "enemies of the French presence" there, the insurgents. The latter are almost invariably presented as agents of foreign imperialism (Pan-Arab, Pan-Soviet or Pan-American), as Moslem fanatics bent on the worst social and cultural reaction, or as leaders of bands of assassins. Unhappily, this is an old story for us; we have already heard such terms applied to the Indochinese Vietminh, the Tunisian Néo-Destour and the Moroccan Istiqlal parties.

Such reports are not necessarily disturbing, however, for most French papers have links with powerful economic groups with interests in Algeria. Some newspapers even receive direct subsidies from the French colonials. But this all harmonizes with the deeply-held sentiment of the French people, that Algeria is France. For years French children have been taught in school that Algeria consists of three French *départements*. Hence it is an integral part of France. From this viewpoint the fighting of the Algerian *maquis* does not represent the attempt of a people to win back its sovereignty, but a rebellion aimed at the integrity and sovereignty of the French Republic.

Those who support the war hold that the Algerian problem is essentially different from those of Morocco and Tunisia, as Algeria never was a nation. Yet the France of Louis XV, the First Republic, the Directory and the Empire had diplomatic relations with an Algerian state. But what is more important is that a nation is, in essence, the will to live in common. Today nine million Moslems manifest their desire to live as a nation. Sooner or later we shall have to bow before these aspirations and set up for Algeria a new status which takes into account the determination of a people to escape domination by a foreign minority.

The problem would really be quite simple if it were only the French of France and the Moslems of Algeria that were confronting each other; a solution along Moroccan or Tunisian lines could be readily worked out. But the great majority of the French in Algeria, rightly or wrongly, believe that they are doomed to destruction and ruin if the bonds with the homeland are loosened and they have to operate on an equal footing with the Algerians. They have been so persuaded that the Arabs are "fanatics" and "loafers" that for fifty years they have unceasingly opposed every liberalizing policy desired by Paris. When, on Feb. 6, the President of the Council and General Catroux spoke of the Algerian personality, of federalism and of a single electoral college, deplorable public demonstrations immediately followed.

THIS is the dilemma confronting the French Government. If it seeks to satisfy the Algerians, it arouses the opposition of the French in Algeria and an important part of French opinion, which is supported by a Right which would accuse the government of "defeatism." If it does not want to displease the Europeans, it must hold to a line which confirms the fellaghas in the opinion that "nothing can be done with France," and that only direct action and terrorism will pay off.

The government of Guy Mollet has very little leeway. There is less and less to be accomplished by delay. The slightest incident may set fire to the tinder in a

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city like Algiers where mutual fear holds the two communities in check. If, in a burst of panic or despair, the two populations fall upon each other, we will see the equivalent of what happened in Vietnam in 1946, in Hanoi, and the deadly bombardment of Haiphong. The gulf which would then be dug between Moslems and Europeans would this time be final, and all chance of living and working together peacefully would be shattered.

The French Government has very few weeks left to act. Observers point out that toward the end of this month the fellaghas will have completed the organization of their troops and will have made the most of the first days of spring to multiply their attacks before the arrival of the army reinforcements announced by the Minister-Resident, M. Robert Lacoste. These actions will mark the critical moment.

What solutions are possible? The conditions of the National Liberation Front (Algerian resistance) for a cease-fire include the recognition by the French Government of Algeria's right to independence; a widespread amnesty; the restoration of democratic liberties; dissolution of the Algerian legislative chambers; a free and ordered plebiscite. All these conditions are more or less implicitly accepted by M. Mollet, save for the first. It is inconceivable that a French Government can, here and now, proclaim the independence of Algeria until Parliament has been consulted. But in this body there is no majority willing to vote such a proclamation.

The problem appears to be to gain time and to bring about a cease-fire. The day that the fighting and assassinations cease, the European population, regaining its calm, will be more amenable to political solutions for a conflict which it does not now believe can be resolved except by military means. Again there are the examples of Morocco and Tunisia. The liberal faction among the French in Algeria is completely unable for the moment to express itself; it has no rostrum and is vulnerable to all the attacks and denunciations of the extremists if it recommends negotiation.

The Algerian leaders have a similar problem. Having held the French army at bay for eighteen months has given them great self-confidence. Their conditions have recently become stiffer. Originally they demanded recognition of the principle of the right to independence and the organizing of free elections. Today they insist on a proclamation of independence and the formation of an Algerian government for sovereign action and negotiation. Even if the French Government agreed to negotiate, we cannot know if the leaders would be willing to defer their claim to independence and to comprehend that no matter how liberal a French government is, it needs time to persuade Parliament and public opinion of the desirability of certain steps.

These leaders hesitate, understandably, because French governments are so short-lived and there is no guarantee that the next government would continue Mollet's policy. "If we return our men to their villages," the Algerian leaders say, "they never will agree to take up arms again." Hence they are impelled to demand maximum concessions immediately.

NEVERTHELESS I believe that an agreement is possible according to formulas which have not yet been worked out but which clearly are based on the French constitutional principle of the rights of peoples to self-determination. Contrary to the Moroccan and Tunisian crises, there has never been any contact between the Algerian nationalists and French political leaders. The day the French agree to negotiate they may perhaps be surprised to find that the Algerian leaders are willing to accept stages and a timetable which would accommodate the susceptibilities of the extremists on both sides.

But could or would M. Mollet take the risk of such negotiations even if they were secret? "It is difficult for Socialist ministers to carry on a policy of the Left," M. Pineau recently told an interviewer. In leaving M. Mollet in power the French Right seeks to saddle him with the responsibility of a war which it would not dare to undertake itself for fear of the financial and psychological consequences.

The Republican Front has a choice between only two sorts of risks. That which leads to full-fledged war could involve important military successes, but it implies the final moral secession of nine million Moslems, that is to say, the end of French presence in Algeria, and consequently in Morocco and Tunisia. That which consists in negotiation implies certain hard blows to our national pride, but it could bring together the European and Moslem communities on a new terrain of human brotherhood. One dares hope that the French government will not hesitate long in making its choice. Another Indochina in Algeria would end only in a fascist government which would perhaps attempt to organize behind M. Poujade, tend to cut France in two, and incur the danger of a civil war from which a dictatorial regime—be it Right or Left—would undoubtedly emerge the victor.

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Crime and Criticism

JOHN P. SISK

MYSTERY stories, like golf, are not spoiled for the highbrows because the lowbrows like them. Once, reading them was something you did on the sly, like kicking your neighbor's dog, but that was long ago. Now a world-famous philosopher gets off a plane carrying Agatha Christie; a renowned Shakespeare scholar is reputed to have read every whodunit in his school's library; writers of great dignity and renown (including T. S. Eliot) are reprinted in *Ellery Queen's Mystery Magazine,* and the Institute of Arts and Sciences at Columbia is cooperating with Mystery Writers of America, Inc., to offer a course in mystery writing.

Yet for all this popularity there is surprisingly little criticism written in this country about the mystery story. An occasional nostalgic note like Anthony Boucher's in the July 3, 1955, *New York Times Book Review* or brief back-page listings such as one finds in the *Saturday Review's* "The Criminal Record" do not compensate for the general critical silence. Perhaps what the mystery story needs, more even than better writers, is a sustaining body of criticism to give it stature and keep it on its toes. Or does the critics' silence express a desire to keep this area of reading free and unspoiled for recreation, a sort of literary national forest to which one can retire and refresh himself in antic vacation clothes?

One of the rare attempts to get to the heart of the whodunit was made a few years ago by Ben Ray Redman in a review of Eric Ambler's *The Schirmer Inheritance* for the *Saturday Review* (Ambler is one of the few mystery writers who rate regular reviews). The mystery, he said, "mirrors in miniature . . . our present human predicament. Living as we do in the midst of a dark wood, where the right way seems to have been lost, and surrounded on all sides by unknown perils and unspeakable possibilities, it heartens us, or diverts us, to read of a hero who can find a path through the darkness, evade the pitfalls, defy the monsters, and win his way to at least a patch of temporary light."

This is a start in the right direction; no doubt Mr. Redman could have said much more if he had the space to say it in. We are grateful for the allusion to Dante, with its implication that the hero is the Virgil who conducts us safely through terrors and bewildering appearances. And unquestionably there is a relationship between the popularity of the mystery, in which, no matter what the pressure, the center always holds, and the state of the modern world, in which it is easy to feel that the center will not hold.

But we have to go back a step and note that the world of the mystery is as abstract and controllable as that of chess or mathematics, as ritualized and conventionalized as that of the western story or the animated cartoon. Basically, the mystery is a masquerade, an exhilarating dress-up party at which we can forget the real world of uncertainty and disorder to play a charade. The depth-psychologists may see the game as a disguise for deeper issues ("we all aspire to crime, we are all guilty; we hunt ourselves down and punish ourselves in expiation"), but it is nevertheless experienced as great fun. This is why we say we read whodunits to relax, an indirect way of acknowledging the basic need to participate in games and masquerades, which is itself a "deeper issue." What we relax from is the tensions of real life, whether those tensions have their source in the conscious or unconscious. We are "out of this world" and at play in a quite Cartesian one that is ordered, disciplined and well-lighted.

ON THE surface there is a paradox here, for the mystery story seems to depend upon bewilderment, doubt of all appearance and constant hazard. But these things are all a pretense, the accepted conventions of the charade, known at every step to be the rules of the game. The real paradox is that there is ultimately no mystery in the mystery story. One reads, or plays, with the absolute certainty that in the end all will be perfectly clear. He has the pleasant awareness of being part of a very rational (though arbitrary and abstract) universe; he has simply not yet got the clue that will make its reason clear. He confronts the unknown with the optimism of a Victorian scientist. The whodunit writer thus only piques our curiosity to satisfy it. At the end of the tale there is not supposed to be any curiosity left over. The circle is closed. If outside it there is still doubt and darkness, it is somebody else's business.

In the world of the mystery the hero—the solver of the puzzle—is a crucial factor in the reader's pleasure.

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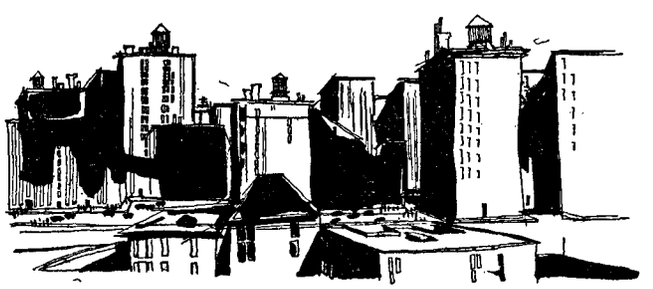
He is the controller, in a sense even the creator, of an artificially clarified and unified universe. He may seem at times to be completely at sea, to be on the verge of losing all to the inscrutable evil ones. But we are not taken in by this act; we enjoy it, knowing that he can no more fail than in the western story the rustlers can win. This is the situation-irony that is fundamental to melodrama, the fun of which lies in sitting back reassured by the style to wait confidently for the villain's inevitable pratfall. And the mystery story is melodrama, no matter how camouflaged with realism or sophistication. The realism and sophistication are simply prescribed elements in the game.

JUST as there is really no mystery in the mystery story, so there is really no death in it, though it satisfies the fascination with death on one level and the need to confront it on some terms. But if death were actually in it we would not read it for relaxation; possibly we would not read it at all. Literally, however, death is in it everywhere, but it is a masquerading abstract death that threatens no one. Between the reader and real death stands the hero, a champion and protector, while the charade nature of the story further protects us.

One might trace a connection between the vision of death in the waning Middle Ages as Huizinga pictures it and the vision of death in the modern mystery —perhaps in the underlying uneasiness about sensuality in both periods—but the differences are more striking. The mystery is not much given to the macabre, perhaps out of prudence, for the macabre, though unhealthy, gets closer to the real thing. But in the mystery, with rare exceptions, we get no closer to the real thing than a pleasant titillation, as if we had gone to the zoo to experience the terrors of the jungle. Or, looked at in another way, in the mystery story we try to appease death, and make ourselves emotionally safe from its horrors, as a savage appeases his god in a ritual dance.

We do not, furthermore, read a mystery for its revelation but for its revelation after complication. Therefore the discipline of a saint is needed to leave even an inferior story unfinished (which suggests how psychologically important it is to arrive at a "clean, well-lighted place"). Even the second-raters have fallen heir to sufficient technique to ensnare the reader.



The Machiavellian element in the mystery is a further important factor in its appeal. Good stories have been written in which the hero is a bona fide law enforcement officer. Nevertheless, the number of stories in which the hero is a private eye, lawyer, priest, physician or some other variety of inspired layman is significant. Of course none of these puzzle solvers is a Machiavellian in the sense that he is part of a conspiracy against existing society. But usually he must beat the police to the solution, and lacking the assistance of an organization, he must use extraordinary means. He must take short cuts; often, at the risk of losing his license if he is a private eye, he must actually violate the law. But necessity breeds a sense of special privilege: in the interest of serving the ends of the law, justice and truth, he becomes dispensed from many of the law's formalities and trivialities.

In modern society this makes the private eye or his equivalent a very attractive person. He is the champion of modern man's attempt to find some kind of autonomy in a world of super organization that wants to consume his individuality. The D.A. (or the Inspector) and the private eye are alike mythical figures who enact endlessly this crucial drama. Its meaning, however, is somewhat camouflaged by the play-acting. The reader is aware that the authorities and the private eye are playing a game in which they must pretend the piquancy of being in competition, and that in the end the guardians of the law will be duly, if somewhat grudgingly, grateful for the superior genius of the hero.

THE STYLE of the whodunit hero is appropriately ironic. Irony is one of the few defenses the individual has in a bureaucratic world; without it he becomes naively involved in the cliches of organization and so loses himself. An ironic attitude is as commonly valued now as a stoic attitude was in the pagan world, and for some of the same reasons. We have lost confidence in the enthusiast Carlylean hero, whose style is hyperbolic and whose aim, we suspect, is totalitarian. Hence the appeal of a hero whose style, while it serves an ultimate commitment to justice and truth, promises the inviolate self: man not taken in, man knowing his way around. Such a one keeps our confidence and admiration even when he is temporarily baffled as he works against apparently impossible odds, for his style means control and success.

In one of her stories Agatha Christie has Poirot refer to the "romance of crime," but the great detective is using the word in an older sense. In the cerebral world of crime detection there is not much time to pursue a lady properly. Romance as we commonly understand it has its own mysteries and is jealous of

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competition. But in compensation there is plenty of sex, which works with the exoticism of the whodunit and often replaces it. Dr. Watson has lost his occupation in the modern mystery, having metamorphosed into lovelies like Perry Mason's Della and Mike Hammer's Velda. Victims, murderesses and accomplices all meet the specifications for Powers models. One cannot tell the good girls from the bad until the last page, for they are all irresistible. Once it was simpler: the irresistible ones were bad.

It is true, of course, that beautiful women have always been more or less important to the whodunit; they have decorated it, charged the air with passion, contrasted effectively with violence and death. But more and more now they titillate it, jazz it up, give it an algolagnic tone, often turn it into a muddy kind of fairy story. They thus outrage the purist whodunit fan, who wants a puzzle in the "fair-play-of-wits tradition," as Mr. Boucher calls it, and not an erotic daydream. They also make it possible for many authors to get by with slipshod work.

Yet, despite the handicaps, there is an amazing amount of good writing in the mysteries—a good deal more than anyone has a right to expect. There is even, I suspect, a good deal more than some of the authors themselves ever anticipated. The creative situation the mystery writer puts himself into is a precarious one in terms of his intention to produce a highly conventionalized, abstract piece of work. He must handle human beings in moments when they are stripped to elemental passions, in surroundings opulent or exotic or both, so that his imagination is unusually stimulated. The danger is that he may be lured into writing better than he means to and may be carried into unexpected depths, so that he ends up by straddling genres or by writing serious novels, which may not be so profitable.

Most of the time, however, he is protected from this fate by the techniques and conventions of his craft, which are calculated to keep him from taking more of his subject—human beings in passionate and baffling situations—than he needs. But there remain those authors who are writing or sometimes write or once wrote mystery stories that were something more than mystery stories and pointed to the wholly serious work they ultimately did or might have done: such writers as Kenneth Fearing, Graham Greene, Eric Ambler, Ronald Knox, J. P. Marquand, Georges Simenon, Elliot Paul and Dorothy Sayers. Thus I find it interesting and significant that Dorothy Sayers, who once wrote fine mysteries, moved on to Dante, only to find herself again at that point where, in another context, the private eye buckles on his trench coat and, knowing full well that he may lose his license, begins his intrepid search—

. . . in a dark wood
Where the right way was wholly lost and gone.

THE SCREEN

OPUS, OPERA

PERHAPS the most amazing thing about "The Last Ten Days" is that such a good film about Hitler and the clique surrounding him should be made in the first decade after the close of World War II. Although most of the action is confined to the Fuehrer's steel and cement bunker underneath Berlin and the people involved are from the near past, Carl Szoskoll's production is done in the grand manner as if it were the last part of a long and deadly serious historical trilogy about the rise and fall of a dictator. As directed by G. W. Pabst, this film belongs to the German cinema tradition of the twenties and early thirties. While "The Last Ten Days" has some of the irony of Chaplin's brilliant "The Great Dictator" (as in the scene showing Hitler decorating ten teen-age "soldiers": "He always loved children . . . especially in uniform") and some of the horrors of the shallow Hollywood-made war films (as in the grim scenes showing the Berlin subways being flooded to prevent their use by the Russians), this picture is essentially interested in presenting the last days of a tragic era. And, in spite of long stretches of dialogue during which audiences who do not speak German have to depend on subtitles, the picture succeeds in being absorbing from beginning to end.

This success stems mainly from the thoughtful screenplay written by Erich Maria Remarque from M. A. Musmanno's novel *Ten Days To Die,* from the effectively simple photography of Gunther Anders and from the fine performances of the cast directed by Pabst. In the most difficult role, Albin Skoda portrays Hitler (who was himself quite an actor) without sentiment or caricature. His Fuehrer is an amoral fanatic who really believes he's leading Germany on to greatness, who can at one moment in the bunker affectionately welcome the children of his friends and at another order the flooding of the subway in which thousands of Germans have taken refuge, who can—without seeming funny—accept his astrologers' interpretation of Roosevelt's death as a good omen and willingly agree with Goebbels' report, after the meeting of the Americans and Russians at the Elbe, that the Allies are fighting among themselves. This cogent portrait of a desperate man is backed by equally impressive characterizations of the large supporting cast, especially Willy Krause as Goebbels, Lotte Tobisch as Eva Braun, Herbert Herbe as General Krebs who dares question Hitler's inhuman acts and asks, "What if God exists after all?" Acting as sort of a Greek chorus or the voice of sanity and German conscience —in contrast to all the decadence in the bunker—

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is Oskar Werner portraying a captain (the film's only fictional character) who arrives from the crumbling Front to ask Hitler for fresh reserves. He is shunted from general to general and finally reaches the Fuehrer near the film's end—to tell him all is lost. Hitler shoots him. But before the captain dies (while Hitler is writing his last will: "The German people are unworthy of me," and while a last drunken orgy is going on in the social room) he warns a disillusioned Hitler Youth to keep the peace and respect the individual. "The Last Ten Days" is an extraordinary film, impressive for its cinema as well as its ideas.

THE RUSSIANS have also sent over an impressive film. But "The Ballet of Romeo and Juliet," presented in this country by S. Hurok, is more impressive for its valiant effort than its success as a movie. This is the first full-length (ninety-six minute) film devoted to one ballet, and while it has many moments of great beauty, the whole, except to students of ballet, becomes rather wearing. With outdoor scenes filmed in the Crimea, where elaborate sets of sixteenth-century Verona were constructed, and indoor scenes shot at the Mosfilm studios, this production in Magicolor is quite handsome. It uses Prokofiev's score and, except for a few changes to fit the ballet technique, it follows Shakespeare's play. The dancers do not speak, of course, but from time to time the dancing is accompanied by a narration—written in flowery English that uses too few quotations from Shakespeare.

Naturally, the dancing is the chief attraction in this Russian movie, and Galina Ulanova's Juliet is always a delight to watch. Most of the men, except for Sergei Koren as Mercutio, struck me as rather beefy; but Directors Lev Arnstam and Leonid Lavrosky handle the dueling scenes with dramatic movement, and the large scenes using the Corps de Ballet of the Bolshoi Theatre are beautifully staged and danced. I am by no means sold, however, on ballet in a realistic medium like cinema. Alexei Yermolayev's ham-acting as Tybalt made most of his scenes ludicrous, and even such a fine dancer as Ulanova couldn't carry the illusion of a youthful Juliet in close-ups. My memories of Antony Tudor's ballet for "Romeo and Juliet" (which, thank goodness, I've seen only in a theater) with Alicia Markova and Hugh Laing are much happier. And still happier in the movie medium is the 1954 Anglo-Italian "Romeo and Juliet" with those incredibly lovely Italian backgrounds and youthful Susan Shentall and Laurence Harvey really looking like star-cross'd lovers. Still, for their handsome production and honest try, the Russians deserve a hand. They may lick the technique of ballet-into-cinema yet. We shall look forward to "Giselle" which they promise next.

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

THE STAGE

THE EXPENSE OF SPIRIT

THE INTERIOR world of Chekhov's "Uncle Vanya" is of a difficult and troubling beauty. Its external profile solicits us with the images of familiar languor: provincial life in its torpid rhythm and rustling dilation of detail; the lengthening afternoons burnished by summer, and evenings heavy with unfulfilled longing, broken only with the sudden passion of rain, or heat lightning silently vivid against the sky. Yet inwardly, the knife of the times turns bitterly in the play, exposing with so tender, pitiless and exact a care the wounds of modern life. It is just this remarkable presence in Chekhov of what I must inadequately call *'the modern'—the quickened intimacy* and fullness with which it has been caught and fixed—that most absorbs yet baffles us in our experience of the dramatist today. For he is the least marmoreal of writers, the least august: he 'represents' nothing, quietly declines grandeur and the pleasures of sibylline authority. There is indeed about him a certain almost intolerable closeness and privacy of perception, and the texture of his work is as spiritually immediate as that of Flaubert is sensuously so; one *sees* these Russian souls withering in their divine discontent as palpably as one hears the thudding ripe peach in Emma Bovary's adulterous garden. Yet never so much as now have we recognized Chekhov's immense superiority to the painter who excels merely in drawing the miniature intricacies of psychology; his subtleties seem to us capable of an infinite dilation and expansion; at his best, he appears not less than great, and his plays stand as one of the formidable contemporary imaginative statements about the career of spirit in time and eternity.

In my vexation and perplexity, casting about to define the source of Chekhov's domination of us, I opened Mr. Lionel Trilling's recent essay on Freud to read the following: "The function of literature, through all its mutations, has been to make us aware of the particularity of selves, and the high authority of the self in its quarrel with its society and its culture . . . we cannot mention the name of any great writer of the modern period whose work has not in some way, and usually in a passionate and explicit way, insisted on this quarrel, who has not expressed the bitterness of his discontent with civilization, who has not said that the self made greater legitimate demands than any culture could hope to satisfy." And I wondered if it is not, perhaps, this to which we respond, however obliquely, in Chekhov. His personages—housekeepers, students, provincial doctors and intellectuals—leave the lightest track on the face of the earth; they do not con-

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front the world on its high and mettlesome terms. Yet their tragic resonance lies, as Mr. Ronald Peacock has suggested in his book *The Poet in the Theatre*, in the test they bring to bear upon life itself: their constant search for "the moment of pure spiritual awareness"; their preoccupation with "the great problem of what constitutes the quality of life outside an immediate practical purpose"; the passionate aspiration with which they ask: "what is the spirit, when it is free?" Mr. Peacock observes that "the magnitude of the question puts it amongst those that are valuable simply by being stated," yet who will deny that out of the answer to it which each character fashions for himself, and the stance with which he confronts his destiny, Chekhov has extracted some of the gravest and most exquisite moral poetry of the century?

This production of "Uncle Vanya," the second in Mr. David Ross' Chekhov cycle at the Fourth Street Theatre, confirms what "The Cherry Orchard" had suggested: that these are acts of perception unique in our theatre. There is about them a wondrous stillness and finality, an amplitude of detail built upon an exactness of line in which the mind and senses and spirit may come beautifully to rest. Mr. Ross has been variously taken to task for heightening the colors of farce which lie in the pools of shadow throughout "Uncle Vanya": I can say only that he does not seem to me to rend the temper of the play as I take it. The disabused eye of Chekhov would be the first to recognize that the expression of deep and passionate human feeling is often grotesque; when we would move the stars to pity, we are most mocked by circumstance, betrayed by the body—that "stupid clown of the spirit's motive" as Mr. Delmore Schwartz calls it in one of his poems.

The subordinate parts in "Uncle Vanya" are played with an extraordinary fidelity and fineness of touch, most notably perhaps by Mr. Clarence Derwent, whose old pedant Serebriakoff drips a ripe and maddening fatuity. The four major roles are done with a richness of authority and intention rare in the American theatre's approach to Chekhov. Mr. Franchot Tone sloughs off the clutter of a career with his delicately modulated portrait of the doctor, Astroff: bone-tired, visionary, eroded by small indulgences and the pettiness of life, yet of a fund and depth of goodness which nothing can obscure. Mr. George Voskovec is the Vanya, and brings to the role an unexpected attack, Slavic energy and sudden flying intensities of emotion: the actor registers Vanya's awareness of his expense of spirit with a horrifying clarity. To the part of Elena, whose remote, baleful personal charm sets disorder running through the house, Miss Signe Hasso contributes her cool Northern beauty and a provocative indolence, together with a knowing sensibility which guards her from sentimentalizing the character. As the good and hapless Sonia, Miss Peggy McCay gives a performance which is all fresh and ingenuous feeling, immensely sturdy and touching and direct. Miss McCay rises superbly to the demands of the closing scene: that exalted meditation on loss and aspiration so just bearable in its powerful tide of longing.

I have not, in these notices of the Chekhov cycle at the Fourth Street Theatre, sufficiently honored Mr. Stark Young's translations, which are the firm and beautiful base upon which Mr. Ross' productions rest. The voice of Chekhov has been so clouded and obscured in our theatre—thickened with cant or a false gentility—that Mr. Young's translations, which release its potency through their own vibrant, exact and accessible language, stand uniquely as creative and reconstitutive acts of the highest fidelity and love. *(At the Fourth Street Theatre, 83 East 4th Street.)*

RICHARD HAYES.

COMMUNICATIONS

"THE LAST HUNT"

Washington, D. C.

TO the Editors: While there may be ". . . no doubt as to who wins at the end of 'The Last Hunt' . . ." [March 16] your movie-reviewer, Mr. Hartung, must be in considerable doubt as to the location of Custer State Park. The last time I visited this magnificent show place of nature it was firmly implanted in *South* Dakota. I feel an apology is in order not only to the expatriated buffalo (dead and alive) but also to the great State of South Dakota!

KARL KABEISEMAN.

CAPITAL PUNISHMENT

Dearborn, Mich.

TO the Editors: In his letter [March 30] Mr. Richard C. Pilger, Jr. comments on the editorial of March 2 on capital punishment and takes you to task for not including retribution as well as correction and prevention as one of the aims of punishment. It seems to me that Mr. Pilger overlooks one point. The discussion concerns not punishment in general but punishment inflicted by groups of men, states or nations. Governments, like parents and teachers, have the right and duty to use punishment for correction and prevention but retribution, as I understand it, is reserved to God. The Apostle Paul writes, ". . . for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord." Romans 12, 19; evidently referring to Deuteronomy 32, 35, "To me belongeth vengeance and recompense. . ."

GEORGE B. DUTTON, JR.

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A Perceptive Report on Varied Cultures

RED, BLACK, BLOND AND OLIVE. By Edmund Wilson. Oxford. $6.75.

By GERALD WEALES

PEOPLE who have met Edmund Wilson say that he is a prodigious listener. He is obviously a careful looker, as well. It is this Wilson the observer, the journalist, that is evident in his new book, *Red, Black, Blond and Olive,* a collection of his travel writings. His method is relatively simple and usually effective. He approaches a country or a culture that is new to him—Haiti, Israel, the Zuñi pueblo in New Mexico—primed with having "read it up," as he says. The impressions and the information that he gathers during a brief visit—less than a month in each of these cases; not long enough, he implies, to let the magic wear off—is then filtered through his reading. His reporting, then, is both descriptive and interpretive; he does not pretend to understand the country as a whole, but that segment of the culture that he does examine, sometimes an institution, sometimes an activity, he relates to what he does know of the country's history, religion, literature or social structure. A person who knows one of these cultures well might consider that what Mr. Wilson has to say is "journalistic," using the word as though it were dirty. But the journalist is not supposed to speak to the expert. He writes for an audience that is less informed than he is, one that can learn more from impressions than it could from monographs. When a reporter is perceptive and intelligent and has the ability to communicate his perceptions through his intelligence, what he has to say, however undefinitive, is useful. Edmund Wilson has these qualities.

His three post-World War II travels account for the red, the black and the olive of his somewhat annoying title. The blond, the bulk of the book, is a reprint of the material about his 1935 journey to Soviet Russia that appeared originally in *Travels in Two Democracies.* In many ways this section is more impressionistic than the others. Often, sandwiched between long and careful descriptions, short paragraphs appear that evoke nothing more concrete than a mood or a feeling; these evocations tell us more about how Mr. Wilson felt in 1935 than they do about Soviet Russia. Except for occasional stylistic changes, the section on Russia appears just as it did when it was first printed, with Mr. Wilson's basic enthusiasm for the Soviet experiment alive behind the criticisms that so annoyed Russia at the time. Now that Leslie Fiedler is trying to convince everyone that he feels guilty or that he should feel guilty for opinions once held, it is refreshing to find this old sympathetic report on Soviet Russia presented "without apology."

Aside from this salutary going against the grain though, it is doubtful that the section really needed reprinting. Although in his Postscript Mr. Wilson finds a relation among his various travel writings that is more apparent to him than it is to the reader, one cannot help feeling that this section was used to swell his travels to book length. In this account of Soviet Russia, it is the new material that Mr. Wilson has added for this edition that is most useful. The early indications of dissatisfaction, which were offered hesitantly, almost grudgingly, have been concretized by the twenty years since the author's visit. His description of Prince Mirsky and his story of the attempts of his friend L. (S. in the original) to get out of Russia combine the impressions of the moment with the knowledge that he has since gained.

Even while he takes delight in the insights that Edmund Wilson is capable of, the non-expert reader may have certain reservations. Wilson says that his was "the kind of foreign travel which has as its main motive simple curiosity." His curiosity sometimes takes him to byways, interesting enough in themselves, like his visit to the Passover celebration of the dying-out Samaritans in the Israel section, which are rather far from the life that gives definition to any of these countries. His writings on Haiti barely touch on the outrageous economic and political set-up that keeps most of the population illiterate and dirt poor; his Israel pieces are aware of, but not preoccupied, as Israel itself is, with the Arabs. He did not go to Haiti or to Israel to bring back political reports, so he certainly cannot be blamed for not having written what he had no intention of writing. Still, one cannot help feeling that it is his penchant for the odd, the archaic, the dying, the significant insignificance that draws his attention away from a country's major, if momentary, concerns. For something of the same reason, it is easy to feel a little uneasy about his discussion of literary figures in Haiti or Israel. Since Mr. Wilson, as a critic, has had many fine and perceptive things to say about a good many of the world's major writers, his enthusiasm for S. Y. Agnon or the Marcelins may well be justified. I am not in a position to argue; yet his fondness for the unusual makes me want to share his revelations with reservation.

Stylistically, Mr. Wilson's reporting is excellent. Although he must necessarily be selective in his description, he seldom gives that impression. He piles up physical detail of an event or a situation, imbuing it as he goes along with whatever significance he wishes it to have. He knows how to use accident effectively—the overheard phrase, the casual sight on the street, the unexpected person to set the solidity of his description in contrast. Only occasionally does the detail become too heavy or the accidental encounter too fortuitous. Sometimes he does fall victim to one of the sins of the twentieth century journalist, who inherited the pathetic fallacy from the nineteenth century poet; he then gives the weather too much credit for sympa-

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Probably (unlike the gentleman above who is of course an agnostic) you are not in the least disturbed about the "revelations on the origins of Christianity" in the Dead Sea scrolls. Nevertheless, you will agree that it was high time a Catholic scholar had something to say on the subject. Here it is:

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thizing with the moods of men. There is more of this in the early writing, the 1935 trip, than in the later sections, and in all cases he handles it less obviously than do less careful writers.

For all the reservations that seem to have found their way into this review, *Red, Black, Blond and Olive* remains a book that is always interesting, frequently fascinating and usually informative.

Destiny of the New China

CHINA: NEW AGE AND NEW OUTLOOK. By Ping-Chia Kuo. Knopf. $3.75.

By HAROLD C. HINTON

IT IS a rare pleasure for a specialist on Far Eastern affairs—there are no experts—to be able to recommend a book on his field enthusiastically to the general public. This book can be so recommended.

Dr. Kuo is an eminent Chinese scholar who served under the National Government, in various capacities connected with foreign affairs, until the Communists "liberated" China in 1949. Since then he has been living in California. His qualifications for interpreting his native land objectively and knowledgeably are about as good as could reasonably be hoped for.

The task which Dr. Kuo sets himself is to explain the failure of the Nationalists and the rise of the Communists. He awards praise and blame wherever they seem to him to be due, but he has no visible ax to grind. He not only succeeds in his task, but succeeds brilliantly. The book is all the more convincing because he is a Chinese speaking to us of his own country, not an outsider trying to gauge currents whose forces he has never felt.

In his first two chapters Dr. Kuo analyzes the nature and ailments of traditional Chinese society in which he discerns, perhaps a little too clearly, an unbridgable gap between the privileged and non-privileged classes. He analyzes Sun Yat-sen's proposed remedy for China's ills and explains with devastating clarity that Sun's followers never implemented it because they had no desire for a genuine social revolution. The rise of the Chinese Communists, and the tremendous contribution which the Japanese unconsciously made to that rise by their invasion of China, are lucidly and accurately described. I am not sure, however, that I agree with Dr. Kuo that the destiny of China had been decided by 1954; with reasonable good sense and good faith, it seems to me, the Kuomintang might still have pulled the fat out of the fire.

In his next three chapters Dr. Kuo sets forth his view of the nature of the Chinese Communist regime. He sees it as a powerful, dynamic, self-assured entity bent on socializing China and, in alliance with the Soviet Union, winning for China the status of a great power. His analysis is valid as far as it goes and should provide a valuable antidote to some of the more emotional views of Communist China which circulate in this country, but it provides no original insights. It is a somewhat impressionistic effort, which manages to convey a basically correct picture without quite laying bare the monster's anatomy and showing how it functions. The probable explanation is that when he considers China since 1949 Dr. Kuo has no special advantage in being a Chinese, so sweeping have been the changes introduced into China since the "'Liberation."

Finally, Dr. Kuo discusses the implications of his findings for the outlook for peace in the Far East. He reminds us of something which our Know Nothings generally ignore: "The greatness of the problems raised by the advent of this new China calls for much sounder measures of statesmanship and vision for their solution than those expressed in an emotional bias against Communism." He predicts, reasonably enough, that China is entering a period of great national power. Such a situation he considers, with less obvious justifica-

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tion, will not necessarily be dangerous: "The best insurance for peace in Asia is a strong China." He thinks that the United States and Communist China are likely to reach some sort of accomodation, and that all is not well between China and the Soviet Union (which is true). At the "appropriate" time, he believes, Communist China should be granted diplomatic recognition and membership in the United Nations.

As an interpretation of the Chinese Revolution, Dr. Kuo's book ranks with, and in some respect above, G. P. Fitzgerald's stimulating and controversial *Revolution in China*. One may agree with Dr. Kuo's viewpoint or disagree with it, but it would be hard to deny that he states his case rationally, lucidly, and with evident sincerity. Of few other recent books on contemporary Far Eastern affairs can one say as much.

Varied Relations

THE OTHER PARIS. By Mavis Gallant. Houghton Mifflin. $3.50.

By EDWIN KENNEBECK

A FIRST-rate short story pays off in tremendous proportion to the space and time it takes up; certain of its highest values depend precisely on its relative brevity. A good short story at least pays even-steven—renders a personality, a setting, an "insight," revives an emotion, or clarifies a situation. There has been an encouraging spate of these concentrated narratives lately —collections of "best stories" of the year, an anthology of Italian tales, books of stories by Sylvia Townsend Warner, J. F. Powers, William Sansom, Mavis Gallant. When they are collected, stories often reveal qualities that were not evident when they appeared separately in periodicals. Read together, they can cripple or bolster one another: for better or worse, samenesses can become more evident; contrasts can gain emphasis.

Miss Gallant's stories do not suf-

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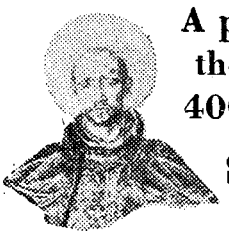

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fer by being read side by side, and they give a cumulative impression of compassion and clear observation, neither of which is falsified or over-exploited. Many are about Americans abroad, mostly young women or children, visitors at unhappy odds with the foreign environment. Some of the characters wish they could "know" the land they are visiting, but they fail to because of circumstances, or because "the other Paris" is not glamorous, but quite sordid. Some have no idea where they are, and show no concern about it. In "Going Ashore," one of the better stories, a little girl and her unintelligent, man-hunting mother, on a Mediterranean cruise, pay an afternoon visit to Tangier, where the mother looks at *Vogue* while they eat lunch, and the girl gets a cheap ceramic souvenir tiger. Then impatiently the mother takes her child back to the ship; on the way, the girl watches "the city, the continent" recede, and thinks, "Is that all? Is that all of Africa?" Another sad, satiric story tells of an American Army family, stationed in a small, hostile French town, as they prepare for a picnic that is to be staged by an American picture magazine as a "symbol of unity" between two nations.

The locales of the stories include Paris, Montreal, Menton, Madrid. What happens is less the progression of plots than the characters' realizations that they are not happy where they are, and will not likely become happy wherever they may go. Several of the selections are "ancedotes," in the sense that they tell primarily of "separable" incidents; these are pleasant—"Wing's Chips" and "Señor Pinedo," for instance. Others are "stories," not separable but woven into an extended web of life, implying or summing up the emotional pattern of a past and a future—as in the title story and "Going Ashore."

Family relationships and family manners frequently give these stories their texture; fears of dull ordinariness set against hopes of adventure and happiness frequently give them their dramatic design. Seldom are the stories refined or concentrated, deepened or heightened, to the degree that indicates permanent art; never are they blurry or monotonous or slick. None of the characters becomes Everyman; but none of them is just anybody. Miss Gallant — with sure knowledge — writes accurately and revealingly of genuinely various people in various milieus.

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A Man's Mission and Temptation

GIDEON GOES TO WAR. By Leonard Mosley. Scribner's. $3.50.

By WILLIAM PFAFF

THIS IS a biography of Orde Wingate, the man who formed and led the Chindits in Burma, the Evangelistic Protestant who was an ardent Zionist and saw as his mission in life the leading of the Israeli army against all its enemies. The closest he ever came to a Zionist command was the organization of mixed Jewish-British combat squads in Palestine in 1938. They fought Arab raiding parties with enough success to constitute a sabot in the machinery of the British Mandate. Wingate was transferred home. His file bore the notation that he was, on the Palestine question, "disloyal" and not to be given another opportunity to demonstrate it.

With war, he went back to the Middle East. He raised a poor mixed force and with it put Haile Selassie back on the throne of Ethiopia. He killed 25,000 camels on a march from the Sudan to Addis Ababa; the last of the beasts died on a hill overlooking the capital. He wrote a furious report on the campaign in which he implacably condemned everyone who had got in his way. (He was quite capable of calling a superior a "military ape" to his face; at this time he was a major with temporary rank of lieutenant colonel.) Cairo headquarters was infuriated at this report and fed up with the man who wrote it. That supreme egoist was so distraught at the lack of justice and understanding he got, so worn down by months of campaigning in some of Africa's worst terrain (usually without European food), that in Cairo in 1941 he cut his own throat. It was a significantly bungled job. (Later he advised a friend that muscular reactions make it extremely difficult for a man to cut his own throat successfully; he recommended a pistol for suicides.)

Suicide was Wingate's great temptation, according to Mr. Mosley. This man sought only power which would enable him to "do good." He had a mission. He was to live by the Old Testament and lead the Jews in fulfilling their prophesied return to Jerusalem. There was for him nothing between success and despair. (But this mission itself he did not discover until 1938. Before that he was vaguely pro-Arab, under the influence of his kinsman, T. E. Lawrence.) He never seems to have realized that while the Zionists appreciated and, indeed, loved him, they were also faintly embarrassed by him. From one viewpoint, they too were serving as means to Wingate's obscure end. He would command. He never seems to have thought to ask whether the Zionists could turn their instrument of triumph over to this British Gentile with the deep, glittering eyes, the

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genius for guerrilla war, the obsession with Godly conquest and the terrible spells of despair and near-physical battle with Satan.

Wingate died in 1944 when his plane crashed in Burma in an electrical storm. He was at the top of success—ordinary success: as the creator of a new form of irregular war and the conqueror of the Burmese jungle. For Wingate, Burma was merely part of the preparation for his mission. One may speculate too that Israel was not really the mission, either. But it was the closest to pure Old Testament righteousness that Wingate could find in this feeble world.

Mr. Mosley's book is clear and adequate in telling Wingate's story. It is less adequate as an explanation. Perhaps only Wingate could have explained, and he was no literary man. This book is enough, though, as a sketch of one of those great and rare and needed men who go through the world much like an elephant through the underbrush, ruthlessly looking for what never can be there.

Shattered World

THEY FELL FROM GOD'S HANDS. By Hans Werner Richter. Dutton. $4.75.

By NEIL BRENNAN

AN ESTONIAN officer scowls at a map, a German WAC laughs and runs naked into the North Sea, a Jewish boy fights off a nightmare, a Bavarian laborer puzzles over an order to retar the camp roofs—scattered over Europe on the eve of World War II are ten people destined to meet in the last chapter of Hans Werner Richter's novel *They Fell From God's Hands.* The kaleidoscopic eye revolves through time: the Russian pilot flies drunkenly off against orders in search for a friend; the Polish girl-chemist sells herself patriotically to an S.S. trooper for information; the Luxemburger fails to seize his hero's death on the desert. Had they been better or worse they might have escaped, Mr. Richter suggests, but their wills forge the chains that lead them together in the end, homeless, desired by no nation on earth. Death, or the name of treason? But in the wasteland, logic dictates the answer. A man should live, not die, for his country, as G. B. Shaw argued, and crucified by this dilemma these characters wind up without a country.

The concentration camp where they meet may recall Remarque's *Spark of Life,* but this camp is only a leitmotif. Its roofs are tarred for the Politicals, then for the Jews, the Russians, the defeated S.S., and finally for the D.P.'s, while the conviction grows on the laborer that the camp is society's fatal cancer. More suggestive of the novel's flavor is Irwin Shaw's *The Brave Young Lions.* A few shared character types (the gentle Jewish boy, the fanatic S.S. trooper), common scenes (battles on the desert, peace in rural America) and a terminal San Luis Rey treatment of the characters link the two novels superficially, but Mr. Richter's, more am-

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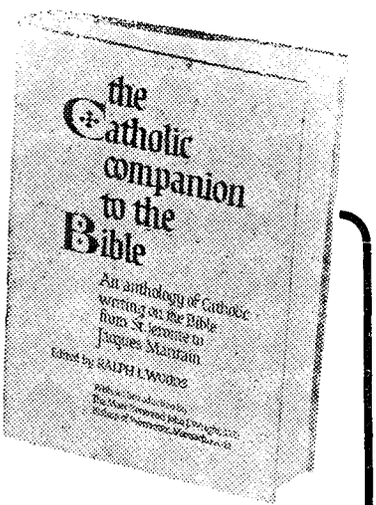

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bitious and less glib, is at the same time a less subtle and more confused work.

As the novel progresses, the theme becomes that of guilt and collective responsibility. That Americans tended to consider all Germans Nazis, and responsible for the war, shocked the anti-Nazi hero of Hans Richter's first novel, *Beyond Defeat,* but here the malaise is epidemic: even the Jewish girl nearly exterminated by the Germans begins to think of exterminating the Arabs, and the Estonian, seeing an American immigration official sneer as he is rejected, thinks, "these Americans were like great children, with their tendency to generalize and simplify everything. . . . A human fate crushed between two warring fronts—that was the sort of thing they were unable to grasp." The terrible irony of *this* simplification—starting anew the whisper in the mind, the scream of the crowd: Who is to blame? and the collective response: They are, the Jews the Germans, the Russians, the Americans!—is too crucial to be left buried without irony in the middle of a chapter.

Art gets buried under fact, too, the imagination falters, and the starkness of the dialogue gives a two-dimensional tone to much of the narration, but *They Fell From God's Hands* seems to merit the prize Thomas Mann among others awarded it, for its vignettes ring true: the Czech mother resisting the temptation to show her adulterous German husband the fingernails broken in his defence; the first mention of God coming from the ex-Russian pilot who is trying to explain the greatness of Stalin to his newly purchased Indochinese bride; the frightened American military policeman shooting by accident the miserable Jewish boy who had deserted the Israeli army to return to the girl he loved—who had just left to find him in the land she loved. These people, says the rabbi who buries the boy, are "the discards of an age that has no conscience," and it is to Hans Richter's credit that he has made the characters of this uneven novel believable both as jetsam and as children of God.

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The Grand Tour

THE GENTLEMAN AND THE TIGER: The Autobiography of George B. McClellan, Jr. Edited with an Introduction by Harold C. Syrett. Lippincott. $6.

By JOHN COURNOS

THERE is an old story about the man who, passing a graveyard, paused before a stone that bore the inscription: "Here reposes a lawyer and an honest man." Perplexed, he scratched his head and mumbled: "How come they buried two men in the same grave?" This amusing tale, however apocryphal, is singularly applicable to George B. McClellan, Jr., son of the famous if not overcompetent Civil War General. Young McClellan served several terms in the House of Representatives and two terms as Mayor of New York City. A Democrat, he entered politics under the aegis of Tammany. What is to the point is that he was, in spite of his political milieu, incorruptibly honest, in particular "money honest," as the phrase went with his Tammany confreres. Well nigh forgotten now, though it was not until 1910 that he gave up office as Mayor, he ought to be remembered as the man who even though he was elected by and kept his office through Tammany, defied Tammany until he broke with Boss Murphy and politics; he then adopted a professorial career at Princeton University, a more congenial occupation for the "gentleman" and "aristocrat" that he regarded himself to be.

McClellan published several historical narratives of only moderate merit, but his autobiography, now published under the editorship of Professor C. Syrett of Columbia University, is in many respects the real thing. Completed before his death in 1942, it was turned over to the New York Historical Society with the stipulation that its publication be held over until after his wife's death. The original title given by the author, better I think than the present one, was *The Grand Tour,* better because it is more inclusive, taking in practically the whole of the author's life, of which the Tiger (Tammany) chapters, though admittedly important, form only an episode.

In his helpful introduction Professor Syrett discusses McClellan's personality and his place on the American scene. There is a repeated insistence on McClellan's position as a gentleman and "aristocrat" of the American variety. He fell somewhere, we are told, between Henry Adams and the two Roosevelts. Adams gave up with disdain because as an aristocrat he found no place fit for his character

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and talents. The Roosevelts overcame such minor considerations and climbed to the top. McClellan, though lacking the scorn of Adams for vulgar political associations, did not possess the overriding abilities of the Roosevelts, and, though he was actually at one time mentioned as a Presidential possibility, he could not muster up enough resources to overcome his handicaps. He would not at any cost sacrifice his standards of honesty and fair dealing. He would not be bribed and nothing, short of being duped, could force him to appoint to office men he held unfit for it. To the very end, when Tammany spewed him out, he retained his integrity. On one occasion a delegation of Tammany leaders came to "demand on behalf of the millions of our cosmopolitan citizens" that he throw the town wide open, a demand which specifically included prostitution, liquor and gambling. The Mayor's flat refusal won him the epithet of "a narrow-minded puritan."

The final phase at Princeton is scarcely less interesting. Here the squabbles and self-seeking in supposedly decent academic circles were eyed by McClellan with truly aristocratic disdain while his devastating portrait of Woodrow Wilson as a vainglorious egoist will surprise and shock the admirers of his ethical prose. McClellan is not an abstract writer; he is specific in all his statements, and he has humor. It must have helped him in many a painful situation, and it makes his autobiography enjoyable reading.

REVIEWERS

Gerald Weales, a member of the faculty of Wayne University, is a frequent contributor to The Commonweal and other periodicals.

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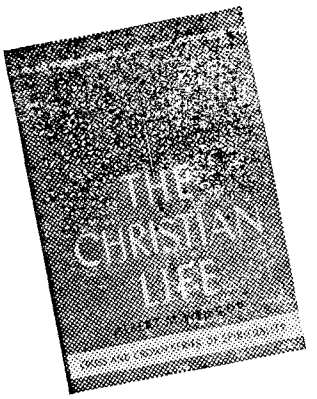
John Cournos is a well-known anthologist and student of Americana.



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Then and Now

Certain individual items in a weekly magazine seem to retain their timeliness over the years—primarily because the problem under discussion is stubborn and difficult to solve. The arms race is one of them. Thirty years ago The Commonweal was concerned about European rearmament; now the United States itself is in the midst of the greatest arms race of all time.

It is worth noting that the civilized world will spend something like twenty billion dollars this year on getting ready to fight. This estimate excludes the sums disbursed by head-hunters, desert chieftains and Chinese bandits. A nation which, like the United States, is dedicated to the preservation of peace will have to levy a per capita tax of something like five dollars to cover the cost of bright new weapons. If there were a sudden imminent danger of war, this sum would be doubled and redoubled, and the attendant waste of human effort proportionately multiplied.

In other words, military preparedness involves a problem in economics which every citizen must be interested in, whether he wishes to or not. The Disarmament Conference is simply a practical attempt to solve the problem by reducing the area into which competition must enter. It is something like a meeting of the board of directors to curtail overhead expenditures. But no effort it makes will be permanently valuable unless the general public —the aggregation of shareholders—resolves to bear its portion of the work to be done.

We in America, for instance, cannot remain cynically indifferent to what is done about chemical warfare and mastodonic artillery on the battlefields of Europe. Though we may aver that never again shall our troops figure there, we must know that prophecy is put to flight by history and that we are as little able to forecast our future actions as a small boy is to predict that he will grow up into a successful playwright. The present is the only time in which action is possible; and the immediate present is big with one question: "What can be done at Geneva?"

—The Commonweal, April 21, 1926

It is in this last and vital phase of the arms race that the U.S. seems to be lagging behind Russia. It has been widely reported, for example, that Russia is almost ready to test a missile with a 1,500 mile range. Not only has the U.S. no missile comparable to this, but the fact that the Russians may have achieved it first has dread consequences for the nation's present defense establishments. Most of the U.S. air bases overseas would be well within range of a 1,500 mile missile, and these bases are currently the very sinews of our defensive strength; without these bases the B-47, a bomber of only medium range, is incapable of delivering an effective blow at Russia.

Even the possibility of these overseas bases being menaced by Russian missiles would seem to indicate that the U.S. should step up its production of long-range bombers, capable of operating against Russia from bases in this hemisphere. Oddly enough, Air Force Secretary Quarles has recently declared himself perfectly satisfied with his present program, which turns out only four such long-range bombers per month, even though the Secretary is also on record . . . that for the next five years the long-range bomber will probably be the most important weapon for carrying thermonuclear war to an enemy. It may be that Mr. Quarles, like Mr. Stassen, is a strenuously optimistic man and devoutly hopes that we will not be needing those bombers at any time within the next five years. . . .

Mr. Quarles' reliance on a defense posture that is at least questionable, and Mr. Stassen's reliance on a disarmament proposal that is ineffective, suggest that the Administration is neither providing the right answers or even asking the right questions in our search for survival in the atomic age.

—The Commonweal, March 23, 1956

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